

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HAVANA 01778 280011Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 IO-13 /126 W
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P R 271746Z JUN 78
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2315
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY ROME

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PDEV MILI ET CU
SUBJ: CUBANS REITERATE MILITARY NON-PARTICIPATION IN ERITREA

1. CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER ISIDORO MALMIERCA, IN A JUNE 26 PRESS CONFERENCE IN ALGIERS, IN WAKE OF PRESENTATION OF PRIVATE MESSAGE FROM FIDEL CASTRO TO HOURI BOUMEDIENNE, REAFFIRMED THAT CUBA FAVORS POLITICAL SOLUTION TO ERITREAN PROBLEM IN WHICH "POPULAR RIGHTS" ARE RECOGNIZED IN CONTEXT OF A UNIFIED ETHIOPIA. MALMIERCA'S COMMENTS ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE MADE PRIVATELY BY FIDEL CASTRO TO CODEL SOLARZ, JUNE 12 (SEE HAVANA 1598), BUT GO SOMEWHAT FARTHER IN ENDORSING POLITICAL SETTLEMENT THAN REMARKS BY POLITBURO MEMBER GUILLERMO GARCIA AT YUGOSLAV PARTY CONGRESS, JUNE 23.

2. GARCIA AFFIRMED THAT CUBA IS NOT MILITARILY PARTICI-
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PAGE 02 HAVANA 01778 280011Z

PATING IN ERITREAN EVENTS, BUT CLAIMED THAT NATO POWERS AND REACTIONARY ARAB STATES HAVE LONG INTERVENED. GARCIA STATED THAT AN EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO OVERTHROW THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT IN ETHIOPIA AND THAT IT IS A DUTY OF ALL NON-ALIGNED STATES TO SUPPORT ETHIOPIA "POLITICALLY" (PRESUMABLY AS DISTINCT FROM "MILITARILY".) GARCIA REAFFIRMS THAT ERITREA IS AN INSEPARABLE AND INALIENABLE PART OF THE

ETHIOPIAN STATE.

3. COMMENT: CUBANS STILL APPEAR TO BE TORN BETWEEN DESIRE TO CONCILIATE ARAB SUPPORTERS OF ERITREANS AND TO AVOID UNDERCUTTING MENGISTU. THE BOTTOM LINE OF THEIR POSITION STILL APPEARS TO BE THAT CUBANS WILL NOT MILITARILY INTERVENE UNLESS WESTERN OR CONSERVATIVE ARAB INTERVENTION BECOMES MORE MANIFEST OR ERITREANS BEGIN TO ACHIEVE SUCCESSES AGAINST MENGISTU'S FORCES. THE CONDITIONAL NATURE OF CUBAN MILITARY NON-INVOLVEMENT IS UNDERLINED BY CASTRO'S REFUSAL TO LIMIT PUBLICLY HIS OPTIONS FOR FUTURE MILITARY ACTION (SEE HAVANA 1598). AT SAME TIME, CUBAN POSSIBILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO ERITREAN POLITICAL SOLUTION IS CONSTRICTED BY HAVANA'S TOTAL OPPOSITION TO ERITREAN INDEPENDENCE AND ITS DEFINITION OF "AUTONOMY" AS IDENTICAL WITH CONDITIONS ENJOYED BY SUBORDINATED REPUBLICS OF USSR (SEE HAVANA-35 DTATED JUNE 21). GLASSMAN

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